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ABSTRACT

This study examined what men and women faculty members expect of university presidential leadership, whether men see leadership in terms of authority and hierarchy and whether women look more for community. Using an analysis of discourse, the study interviewed 30 faculty members at a public, research university in the western United States. The university's president was male and new to the university although this was his third presidential position. The participants all thought that the most important quality a president needs is vision. In addition both male and female faculty viewed the ability to communicate and to interact with a variety of funding sources as a critical skill for a president. Other skills and qualities sought by faculty in a president were fostering collegiality in relations between faculty and president through shared scholarly experience and achievement as well as an ability to make decisions, particularly difficult budgetary ones. Though faculty wanted a significant voice in governance and preferred decisions reached via consensus, faculty also advocated the need for strong leaders to make the tough decisions. Overall, no significant differences were found between male and female faculty members' expectations and interpretations of presidential leadership along gender lines. Contains 24 references. (JB)

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FEMALE AND MALE FACULTY: EXPECTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP IN A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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Problem Statement and Literature Review

The recent leadership literature suggests that leaders can and do have great influence on organizations. Leaders, however, are not the only stakeholders in organizations. The words and actions of leaders can have great influence over the work and lives of other organizational members.

In higher education organizations, presidents are called upon to provide a vision for their particular institution. This encompasses claiming an institution's past, defining its present, and offering a course for its future. Higher education institutions are unique among organizations as faculty often participate in governance, to varying degrees, control much of their own work, and often maintain ideologies which conflict with those of the administration. Faculty themselves represent diverse interests and do not always speak with a unified voice, a fact which the literature on president/faculty relations often fails to acknowledge. A president's interactions are not with the faculty but rather with individual campus leaders, participants in governance organizations, members of departments, and the like. Factors such as gender, discipline, and longevity can shape faculty opinions and beliefs differently.

Neumann and Bensimon (1990) suggest that the literature on leadership in college and university presidencies has focused primarily on desirable presidential traits, leader-follower relationships, leadership behaviors and roles, and how these vary by institutional context. This literature has gained prominence in recent years because of the calls for reform in higher education and the belief that the literature verifies "faith in the power and wisdom of leadership and its potential to make a difference in colleges and universities" (Bensimon,

Neumann, and Birnbaum, 1989 p.1).

There are many competing views and theories of leadership in higher education. For example, Trow (1981) takes a more traditional view that leadership in higher education is the taking of effective action in order to shape the character and direction of an institution. Conversely, Tierney and Foster (1989) question the functionalist approach and argue that leadership in higher education is not a function of position and not defined by successful attainment of organizational goals but rather is a product of an organization's culture. The university presidency may be more symbolic role than a substantive one. Birnbaum argues that leaders "must consistently articulate the core values of the institution and relate them to all aspects of institutional life" (1989, p.47).

Studies of university presidencies do generally deal with a president's vision for the institution. However, this only occurs from the perspective of the president. The literature fails to acknowledge that other actors are involved. It is unquestioned that other individuals know and support a president's vision. The interpretation and response to a president's vision by other people on campus is not considered in this literature. These others are left out when determining the institution's goals in entering a new presidency. As Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum suggest, "a research agenda for leadership must recognize that leadership, as is the case with other social constructs, is multidimensional and that its definitions and interpretation will legitimately differ among different observers with different values whose assessments may be based on conflicting criteria, units of measurement, or time horizons" (1989, p.80).

Research on leadership is generally presumed to be gender neutral. There is an

assumption in the leadership literature that men and women respond to leadership in the same ways; gender is rarely a consideration in discussing leader-followers relations. The frameworks which we use to examine leadership (e.g. bureaucratic, collegial, political) were constructed largely by men without considering that gender differences may be a relevant factor in their formation (Bensimon, 1989). Typically, leadership is described in characteristics which are primarily said to be masculine--aggressiveness, forcefulness, competitiveness, and independence. Women are said to be alienated by notions of control, individualism, hierarchy, and independence in organizational contexts (Blackmore, 1989). An absence of women in positions of authority has led women to identify less with authority figures than men do (Belenky, et al., 1986). Thus, basing these frameworks almost exclusively on the experiences and interpretations of men has made men's experience with organizations normative thereby excluding the voice of women. Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984) suggest that there is an androcentric bias in organizational research and that we need new approaches to better understand all of human behavior.

Leadership reinterpreted from a feminist perspective places importance on the notion of community, where collaboration, interpersonal relationships, and support are central. Women are reported to view leadership more as the responsibility to and empowerment of others rather than as authority and control over others, as men are said to define leadership (Blackmore, 1989). Scherr argues that in organizations, men "follow a morality based on justice and rights, striving to be fair" while women "follow a morality based on care and responsibility, striving to avoid hurt and to maintain relationships" (1986, p.3). This male pattern of thinking--the justice orientation--has been institutionalized in organizations.

Meanings in society have been constructed by males and validated in reference to males (Spender, 1980). Leadership is one of those meanings. Our meanings of leadership in higher education are therefore largely created based on experiences of males as leaders and in our response to leaders, primarily males. Norms of leadership are male norms (Davies, 1985).

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The questions raised in this paper are: What are faculty expectations of presidential leadership in research universities? Do male and female faculty reveal different expectations and interpretations of university presidential leadership? The literature suggests that men will see leadership more in terms of authority and hierarchy, whereas women will speak more to notions of community.

This paper examines the discourse of 30 faculty members, many of whom are leaders in several different faculty governance organizations, at a public, research I university in the West. These faculty, both male and female, were selected across disciplines and ranks and are taking part in a study on change in presidential leadership. The objective of the broader study is to investigate whether or not a new university president can impact institutional ideology and to what extent. The current president of the university is male and in his second year, replacing a president who served nine years. This is the new president's third presidency but his first in a research university. Each faculty member interviewed was specifically asked about their expectations for and interpretations of the leadership of the university's immediate past as well as current president. The comments presented in this

paper were selected from transcripts of my interviews with these faculty and are taken as representative of the diversity of faculty in this study.

The method employed in this paper is the analysis of discourse. Discourse analysis is central to much of the research aimed at understanding a society's culture, point of view, or ideology. Ethnographies of communication allow for an examination of how language and culture are joined and influence one another. The language one uses demonstrates how an individual thinks and believes; one's point of view. Language patterns also reveal local communicative norms. It is language which also shapes what others know and think. In higher education, the systematic use of language as data is infrequent.

This paper begins with the premise that men and women use language differently. This is tied in part to social structure which has granted men a long history of control over public discourse. While there have been many studies on language differences between men and women, the relationship between communicative form and social function has not been adequately explored (Philips, 1980). Cameron argues that most sex difference research comes out of a "sexist ideology" which claims "that men are the norm from which women deviate, that the male norm is superior to the female deviation" (1986, p.28). The monopoly of males with regard to the construction and use of language creates an "other" nature for females (Spender, 1980).

Language differences between men and women can be applied in higher education as Tannen points out that academic women are more likely to use language which highlights connections and intimacy, whereas the language of men reveals concerns for status and independence (1991). Women are also more apt to reveal a view of the world as a private

endeavor which is characterized by the use of more personal anecdotes in discussing professional situations. Astin argues that among academics, women are more apt than men to advocate social values (1992). Science, so closely tied to higher education, also operates in a language which highlights male/female languages differences by separating the public from the private and the impersonal from the personal (Keller, 1985).

Bensimon (1989), in her research on a male and a female president's definitions of leadership, offers several departure points for analysis: 1) women shape their identity in terms of relationships, men in terms of separation; 2) women view themselves as interdependent, men as independent; 3) women perceive the world as physically and socially embodied based on wants and needs not rational control, while men perceive the world as physically and socially disembodied with uniform rules and laws that are rationally based. Blackmore (1986), in a study of female educational administrators, found that the discourse of these women emphasized caring and reciprocity, recognized friendship, and stressed commitment to participatory democracy.

The differences raised by these scholars provide the foundation for understanding the discourse of academic men and women. These findings provide also an understanding as to how variations in the expectations and interpretations of faculty men and women with regard to presidential leadership in a research university may exist.

The purpose of this paper is not to advocate that either the language of men, or the social constructions of leadership made by men, are superior to those of women, or that the views of women are somewhat deviant. Rather, I am interested in how people experience organizations differently and particularly if male and female faculty communicate different

expectations and values in institutional leadership. It is not my intention to engage in labeling. This is the case of one institution and my analysis of it given the parameters of my study. It is my hope that this paper will raise awareness, questions, and encourage further inquiry.

This paper makes a contribution to our understanding of academic leadership in several ways. Research on academic presidencies is largely grounded in the perspective of the president without considering how the president's vision is understood by others. Unlike much of the mainstream literature on leadership, this research assumes that leadership is gendered and thus, men and women do experience it in different ways. Bensimon (1989) has argued that women have previously not been given a place as interpreters of organizational life. The questions raised here take up that challenge and offers both women and men opportunities for individual and collective point of view. This paper also takes up a challenge offered by Lincoln (1989). She has made the call for more research on understanding leadership in a grounded context and with more emphasis placed on the experiences and interpretations of participants within the organization.

Research shows that men and women do use language differently and do respond to leadership differently. Little is known about how the differences apply to faculty in a research university. This paper addresses some of those questions.

Data Analysis

The literature on academic presidencies suggests that those presidents who are most effective are committed most to their own vision. A president's vision is often seen as a

signifier of true leadership (Fisher, 1984). Overwhelmingly, the faculty interviewed in this study when asked what their expectations of presidential leadership were in a research university responded that the most important quality a president needs to possess is vision. Operationalized, the term vision means the development and setting of institutional goals and objectives, both in the short-term and the long-term. This is coupled with the ability to generate the support of the entire campus community and turn goals into reality. This requires a comprehensive knowledge of the variety of roles higher education fulfills in American society and an adeptness at working with people. Faculty do exhibit a willingness to trust a president in constructing a vision for their institution. Additionally, presidents are seen as responsible for creating and facilitating an environment that provides those within the institution the means to carry out their work, whether it be teaching, research, or service.

> "I think a president of a university expresses, is charged with expressing the vision of the institution. Some presidents do it by asking others what the vision is and then articulating it. Some presidents do it by just leading and inventing a vision and inviting others to follow that vision. So there are different styles. But everyone looks to the president for an articulation of a representation of the vision of the institution." (Male)

> "One, vision. I think that someone needs to have a clear idea as to where they want the university to go. Then, I think the capacity to make that happen. Either by their leadership or by their appointments to make sure that their agenda is put into place." (Male)

> "I think it's to set the priorities of the institution. To provide direction. I think to advocate... for the whole of the institution and its direction, provide overall guidance." (Male)

> "Well, I expect that the president is going to set a tone and a general direction for the institution. The tone would have to do with ways in which we're going to do business." (Female)

"I expect them to set the trends of the positions that we should take for the future. And I think they should be very far-sighted. They should recognize where universities are going to be in the next ten to fifteen years. They ought to provide liaisons to our financial support whether that be federal financial support or state financial support. They ought to identify the trends that the faculty needs to be aware of for the future, and help us decide where we need to be without mandating where that is." (Female)

"I expect a president who understands the problems that the university faces, understands the external environment, understands what all the imperatives of the university are, understands that universities in the United States, they are in a state of true crisis, understands where that crisis comes from, the role that has been played by both the university internally and the society outside in having created that crisis, and has a vision, ideas, and the ability to lead to something better." (Male)

"Well, I think besides the obvious quality of leadership, the individual has to have an understanding of what a research university is. And a very strong vision of what they want to accomplish and to understand what they need to accomplish. And then the ability to communicate that. And then the ability to get people to support him or her in what they're trying to do. And the last thing, of course, is that they have to develop an understanding of how the university that they have assumed leadership of operates so that in working with this culture they understand what the values of the culture are and how their goals and vision may either complement, support, or conflict with what is already extant when they become president of a university." (Male)

At a more practical level, faculty view the ability to communicate and to interact with the variety of funding sources as the most critical skills to be possessed by a research university president. The ability to articulate institutional objectives must be exercised at all levels--to state officials, the community, as well as to faculty, staff, and students. And this communication should be on-going.

"I would say some leadership requires some direct, regular, clear communication." (Male)

"The president should be the outreach man. He's the one who deals with the community, with the alumni, with the business, with the Regents, with the legislature." (Female)

"I think the ideal president would be one that was able to assess how to phrase to the general public the purpose of a multi-purpose university." (Female)

Given the fiscal crisis faced by many universities, fundraising and interacting with funding sources are increasingly important role that presidents are expected to perform.

"I think that presidents, the major function of presidents at many universities is to fund raise for the university, interact with alumni, alumni spouses, and so forth in a fundraising mode." (Female)

"My feeling about presidents of universities are at the functional level their job is to raise money, to set the tone for the kind of expectations that a research university should have." (Female)

"Mostly I expect them to make the link with the legislature and the larger funding situation. I mean I think the academic leadership in practice comes from the provost because he has his feet much closer to the academic setting. And a university of this size definitely needs leadership beyond the university within the university-wide, the state-wide system of universities." (Male)

Presidents are expected to know their audiences and know how to adapt the institution's message appropriate to those audiences.

Collegiality is a critical element in faculty-president relations. Faculty expect a president to have an appreciation of and an active role for faculty in institutional governance. This belief translates to faculty as respect. The perception by faculty of a strong voice in governance is one of the most positive influences on their morale. A president who advocates significant participation of faculty in governance does a lot to demonstrate a belief in collegiality.

"There seems to be a much more team-oriented approach... He's attempted to create more dialogue on this campus about issues... so I think there has been some change in management style." (Male)

"Well, I think an atmosphere of support and respect for faculty. A sense of balance among the competing and diverse major commitments and goals of a major university, whether labeled a research university or not." (Male)

"I expect them to believe in faculty governance. Encourage research productivity as well as reward teaching." (Female)

"I expect a university president of a Research I university to be a leader, but collegial among faculty and the middle management." (Female)

While female and male faculty both articulated the importance of collegiality and a role for faculty governance in the institution, these factors were much more prominent in the discourse of women. The aspiration of women to promote interconnection and community, consistent with other works which highlight women's advocacy of democracy in educational organizations (Bensimon, 1989; Blackmore, 1986), is consistent here. At this Research I university, the president's attempts at doing so received positive marks from female faculty.

"I think he's been a remarkable leader in the way that he has included people in decision-making. I'm a strong supporter of that way of managing." (Female)

"I would characterize (the previous president) as very authoritarian, a top-down and divisive kind of leadership style... (The current president) impressed me from the begin as somebody who really believed in participative, facilitative management kind of leadership and management style." (Female)

"If he could, the one thing that he could do that would be really outstanding is if he could create a sense of community on this campus, he would have accomplished a lot. If he can create a sense of shared goals among the faculty, he would have accomplished a lot." (Female)

Male faculty were not always so positive about participatory governance. Their advancement of it was not as consistent. While in principle they may support consultive decision making, men were more inclined to expect the presence of a decisive leader who will execute the authority that accompanies a leadership position.

"One part of me appreciates the fact that he's delegated some amount of planning and decision making to faculty and other people around campus. But another part of me sees these actually very large committees and multiple task forces as not necessarily being a very streamlined way of decision making." (Male)

> "They are responsible for and should be competent at making decisions. It's fine to deliberate and have committees and talk and reports, somebody has to finally decide, this is what we're gonna do. And that has to be based on a plan. It has to be based on a vision." (Male)

The ability to be a leader in higher education is said to require participation in the activities of faculty. Central to that is an active and accomplished research record. Being judged to be a scholarly peer is seen by faculty to be important. This president's lack of what some faculty see as a scholarly record, clouds the views of some in acknowledging his ability to be an institutional leader. Additionally, for the bulk of this president's career in higher education to be in administrative roles outside of the academic department is not looked upon favorably. Faculty see collegiality as coming from shared experience, as faculty. Career administrators lack the depth of that connection.

> "He did not have a research program as I would identify it as such." (Female)

> "While I had misgivings, which I expressed at the time, that his scholarly credentials were deficient, and in fact he himself, given his credentials, could not achieve tenure at this university." (Female)

> "It seems to me that the president ideally... should exemplify by his or her own accomplishments and activities the highest aspirations of the faculty at the institution in scholarship, research, and education. I would like the president of a major research university like this one to be somebody who has a truly eminent scholarly record." (Male)

To faculty, this bespeaks an enormous inability on the part of the president to fully understand and appreciate their work as scholars. Faculty within research universities see them as unique institutions, vastly different from other sectors of higher education. This uniqueness requires that a president possess long-standing experience in such an institutional type. Only then does one become capable of assuming a leadership position in a major, research university, at least in the eyes of the faculty interviewed here.

> "I was disappointed in his level of experience in that he had never been in a research university before." (Female)
>
> "(I thought the job would be a) stretch for him because he'd come from a relatively small institution where he'd done very well (but being in a research university will) demand a lot of him." (Male)
>
> "I was apprehensive about (the new president's) experience... I didn't know how meager the experience was, largely because I wasn't fully aware of the institution from which he was coming." (Male)

Despite this president's long career in a variety of roles in a number of higher education institutions, faculty discounted his experience and maintained a skepticism about his ability to succeed in what they described as a fundamentally different environment. The concern relates to his research background. Faculty did not express concern about the president's desire or ability to manage over the teaching and service functions of the institution. Vision is seen as grounded in broad participation in an institution of similar type.

Leadership often requires evidence of something tangible. A leader is expected to be active and productive. A university president is expected to propose and to initiate policies and programs. The absence of such indicates to some an absence of leadership.

> "Inside the campus, I don't think that there's been serious evidence of leadership, in a whole bunch of ways, in terms of formulating and setting forth ideas, in terms of inspiring the faculty and students to a sense that something good is going to happen. I don't think there has been serious leadership at all in those areas." (Male)

Under the president's direction, these products (e.g. policies or programs) of leadership are also suppose to have consequences for individuals in terms of uplifting spirits or improving attitudes. People maintain an enduring hope that they will feel good about what is happening within the institution. Stakeholders look to the president for that reassurance.

> "The job of an administration under those circumstances is to help people to stay focused on the positive and to see the direction of the future and how life will be better, or how life can be sustained and enhanced even under the current circumstances... The primary job is to be good managers, is to lead away from the morass and towards the sunlight, wherever that is. And I think that's their primary job." (Male)

For many of the faculty interviewed for this study, identifying a concrete successful act performed by the new president was difficult. Inasmuch as he was in his second year, the president was expected to have by this time accomplished something that made his mark on the institution. Having not done so, his lack of failure was frequently cited as his greatest success. This was articulated primarily by men, and not done so with satisfaction.

> "He hasn't really screwed up. He hasn't made an abominable mistake. But he hasn't had any great successes either." (Female)

> "I think he hasn't made any great mistakes, but he hasn't done any great and bold things either." (Male)

> "It's hard to judge any success. I guess he has been successful in not really being controversial." (Male)

> "In one sense he's been successful in that he's not in great personal deep trouble yet." (Male)

> "The place hasn't collapsed." (Male)

Faculty informants identified few failures by the president. However, given that the president's honeymoon period had passed and with only the status quo to point to as evidence of the presidency, the possibility of any future success was seen as increasingly remote.

By and large, there was a general agreement on the part of faculty that the president had been slow to reach decisions. This perceived lack of quickness by the president was raised in the interviews by both men and women. Women, generally, only acknowledged that they thought he was slow.

"If there's one area where I'm really concerned about it, has been his really slowness in making decisions." (Female)

"His modus operandi has been up till now is to just react to problems... I see him as reactive and not proactive." (Female)

For men, however, the pace of the president's decision making style was much more problematic. A leader who is judged to be slow in making decisions brings about considerable discomfort to some within the organization. It also calls into question his capability and effectiveness as a leader.

"I have to say that I share with some others, a concern about the deliberateness of his style. It's a little frustrating, and maybe it's not realistic, but I think the expectations I had... we're gonna see, we're gonna feel, we're gonna tangibly be in touch with this new leadership and new direction. It's something that I think I was looking forward to, and very little of that has happened." (Male)

"He's gradually come out of his shell and started to make some larger decisions. He's tried to involve a large base and spectrum of people in university decision-making which is good, but on the other hand a president is expected to impose their mark and use their authority to make difficult decisions and to move quickly and I haven't seen a lot of that yet. I guess I'm disappointed with the slowness with which he has come out of his early cautious phase." (Male)

"But I think, it's interesting that he's afraid to make those most difficult decisions. And I think he's selling himself short." (Male)

Part of the interview schedule was devoted to a discussion of budgetary issues. Faculty were asked about ideally what they would hope to see from a president in times of budgetary stress. There was general agreement that they wanted someone in the presidency who is ready, willing, and able to make tough decisions.

"I really hope that the president will make the hard choices that have to be made, and truly come to grips with what this institution should be about. And go about restructuring the institution to achieve that. And I think it's very clear that we cannot do everything we've been trying to do, and do it well. And that we're going to have to pick and choose what we do, and do it well." (Female)

> "So far, the leadership of the university has acted as though they can do everything... I want to see a president who says something very strong and dramatic, like we cannot have a College of X or College of Y in this university." (Male)

However, as is evident in the following responses, faculty informants consistently wanted these decisions to be made with a sense of humanity. This hope may indicate a belief in higher education as a people-driven enterprise, one that sets it apart from industry and its organizational and managerial perspectives.

> "One is a president who is willing to make hard decisions, and not hedge. Two, a president who doesn't forget the human costs of what these decisions entail." (Male)

> "Obviously some hard decisions can be made and you're not going to satisfy everybody. But I think that also there has to be a recognition that people make an investment of themselves in an organization and you can't alter programs overnight." (Male)

> "Some difficult decisions need to be made, but that person needs to make them. However, I think that during these times, there needs to be a lot of humanity pervading these decisions." (Male)

The paradox of this is that while they say they want a significant voice in governance and decisions reached via consensus, faculty, men and women both, advocate the need for a strong leader to make the tough decisions. The former president was criticized for being too much of a top down, autocratic leader; the new president is not enough of one. Bowen and Schuster (1986, p.141) have acknowledged this by offering that "although the faculty's natural ambivalence about forceful administrative leadership was evident, leadership which provided institutional direction in tough times was clearly appreciated by the faculty."

Men, far more often than women, made reference to what they see as a corporate model of leadership. Uniformly, they expressed disdain for a business-style of management as potentially applied to a university. Such models were not accompanied with an

explanation or definition, thus communicating that the composition of corporate leadership is a socially understood concept. Presumably this is a top down, autocratic, for-profit approach to management.

> "... based on the corporate model and universities are in some ways corporations, but they are not corporations, so the collegial element is very important." (Male)

> "He didn't bring a business-world ethic which could simply destroy the university." (Male)

Expressing a more specific concern, these male faculty were suspicious of the president's attempt to bring a form of Total Quality Management (TQM) to the university. The structure and nature of higher education institutions, seen as fundamentally different from corporations, caused this concern.

> "One of the essential elements of TQM as it is described in application to the business industry is the significant involvement of employees at all levels, and this has been a top down process. The committees were all picked by the president or his advisors. They relate only to him. Too many people on them are simply not involved. And it's being done in a rather short period of time." (Male)

> "This whole TQM process, that to me, that bespeaks an enormous failure to understand the dynamic of a university... Here we have his attempt to impose this model of corporate management, corporate restructuring on the university without virtually any thought being given to the fundamental differences between a university and a place like Intel Corporation." (Male)

Davies (1985) offers that the language of organizations is one of accountability, cost effectiveness, and staff rationalizations. Despite a contempt for business practice and its potential application to higher education, as shown here, men often adopted a corporate rhetoric in describing academic leadership, using words such as "downsize" or "streamline".

> "I wish he were more assertive, more immediate in his response to circumstances and conditions as they are here, at least as perceived by those who have been here longer. More specifically, I would like to have seen him move more definitely to modify and streamline and decrease the size and complexity of the central administration." (Male)

The former president was routinely criticized by many for making units within the institution competitive with one another, particularly with regard to institutional resources. Males, however, sometimes viewed this creation of conflict as a positive and necessary ingredient of effective leadership, advocating the view that conflict spurs people into action. The new president's failure to stimulate conflict was often chided. This avoidance of conflict is thus the avoidance of progress.

> "There's no controversy... (The previous president) provoked you to respond, negatively or positively." (Male)
>
> "Nothing useful is going to happen in an institution like this without somebody sticking his neck out and being willing to have it cut off... I haven't seen him actually propose something and risk the impact." (Male)
>
> "(The new president is) very remote, not aloof, but shy, unwilling to put himself on the line... I greatly appreciated (the previous president) as being a very self-confident, out front kind of a guy. He stood up and said what he believed no matter how upset people got. I appreciated that... There is a tendency for our current president to want to remain free of any scars, bruises, or responsibility for things unless they go perfectly well... There is a perception that this president is trying very hard to protect himself... by having very adroitly remained quite distant from painful decisions, from things that make people angry." (Male)

This is consistent with Tannen, who claims that men are prone to conflict. She argues that for women "conflict is a threat to connection, to be avoided at all costs. Disputes are preferably settled without direct confrontation." Whereas for men, "conflict is the necessary means by which status is negotiated, so it is to be accepted and may even be sought, embraced, and enjoyed" (1991, p.150).

The following examples rather dramatically exemplify differing attitudes regarding institutional conflict. The man, below, shares his belief that the president is afraid to engage in conflict, whereas the woman sees the creation of conflict as part of his behavior and is,

understandably given her description, quite uncomfortable with it.

> "He just is not accessible to most people. He seems to be a shy, a painfully shy and uncomfortable person when it comes to interacting, especially with hot-headed, heavy-handed, strong-willed faculty like me." (Male)

> "In his interactions with me, basically he tries to avoid in any way communicating with me, he loses his temper and calls me names for ten minutes. So I don't think he has, he loses his cool. My impression is that he is a very vindictive person." (Female)

The male faculty member above would probably appreciate being called a few names by the president.

Charisma is often a word that is used to describe many leaders. While charisma is not used to describe this president, the faculty informants did volunteer attitudes about his personal disposition. In describing the president's personal characteristics, men and women offered different perspectives on what they value. Tannen (1991) suggests that for women it is more important to be liked, whereas for men, it is more important to be respected. That distinction is evident here.

> "I think he is a decent man." (Male)

> "I found (the new president) to be a very impressive guy." (Male)

> "At first I thought he was very suave, and really well, you know, had a lot of knowledge about being a president since he was one." (Female)

> "Obviously a very pleasant fellow." (Female)

> "I like the guy. I think he's very nice and I think he does have some qualities." (Female)

> "He's a very good people person. I think he communicates quite well. And I think he is basically sensitive to interpersonal relations." (Female)

While men would sometimes acknowledge that they think of the president as a "nice

guy," they were more apt to describe him in terms of his honorability or respectability. Women were more likely to comment on the president's likability and interpersonal skills.

Female faculty saw a change in institutional leadership as an opportunity for issues that they felt had been neglected to receive attention. What may seem obvious, primary among these are concerns relating to gender and diversity. Female respondents consistently articulated their hope that the new president would address issues of gender and diversity at the institution.

> "I would like to see him have a more assertive effect on women hiring and minority hiring at the university. I think that's suffered greatly under (the previous president)." (Female)
>
> "I was very optimistic in that he was sensitive to a number of areas that had been neglected or not well handled in recent years, in particular undergraduate education and diversity." (Female)
>
> "I expect a couple of things. I expect well-articulated principles of how the institution should go about achieving its mission and what its mission should be... I was very disturbed about how (the previous president) framed and articulated issues related to both gender and diversity. Because it seemed to me that he was very weak. And the message he sent to the university community was that these don't really matter. And so part of what I think a university president does is set the tone for the institution as a whole." (Female)

While men, in many cases, would be supportive of increased attention to issues of gender and diversity, it was not volunteered in the interviews that they saw this as a priority to be addressed by institutional leadership.

Discussion

The existing body of literature in higher education is not clear as to the influence of gender in understanding dealing with president-faculty relations. This arises primarily

because the questions are not asked. Faculty in research universities are differentiated in many ways. Gender is only one. In understanding the relationships faculty maintain with institutional leadership, we need to acknowledge that faculty are diverse. And they make different demands and have different expectations of presidents.

The presidency of a research university is an enormously complex position. Presidents are expected to understand their institutions, envision a course for the future, and then find a way to make that future a reality. Faculty want presidents who are visionaries, orators, fundraisers, scholars, colleagues, likable, and respectable. Presidents must be consultive, yet decisive.

Given all the external and internal demands placed on a president, does it really matter if male and female faculty relate to and assess the president differently? Yes, in that faculty morale and thus by extension faculty support can be tied to views of institutional leadership. Awareness of and attention to differing interpretations may be the difference between success and failure. Understanding what is problematic for faculty may help avoid pitfalls.

A growing number of studies indicate that women do experience organizations differently than men. Women and men also communicate different messages in their language. In this paper I have tried to join those two ideas. By looking at faculty and leadership at a research university, I have found that men and women hold similar expectations for institutional leaders in higher education. Yet there are slight differences. Chiefly among them is the idea which Tannen (1991) calls "community and contest." The women in this study were the more ardent advocates for a president who strives for

democracy, collegiality, and community building. While not dismissing these aspirations, men saw conflict as necessary and leadership as exercised through strong, decisive action.

The prominent differences between female and male faculty and their expectations and interpretations of presidential leadership that I hoped and expected to find were not apparent. There may be several reasons for this.

First is my execution of the study. I brought my own language biases into it. And as a man using a language where men control the norms of language use, my own background may have prevented me from having a thorough understanding of my female informants. As Kramarae (1980, p.61) argues, "Women's experience, when recorded, has usually been recorded by men and through the medium of a language by men." Of this, I am guilty.

Second, differences in the language of male and female faculty may not have been evident because there are not any. As Stelling and Bucher (1973, p.661) suggest, "The process of professional socialization involves taking on a professional identity... These acquired professional perspectives are expressed in common vocabularies." Perhaps male and female faculty have been socialized into one academic discourse which knows no gender demarcations. It is more likely that women have adapted their discourse to that of men. Because of the need to "fit" in organizations, women in higher education often attempt to neutralize gender in order to gain professional acceptance (Swoboda and Vanderbosch, 1983).

Gender is a very salient topic for consideration when doing research on how organizations and their leaders impact the lives of institutional stakeholders. I have attempted to demonstrate that female and male faculty in a research university do have

different expectations and interpretations of presidential leadership, however slight. Women and men do bring unique perspectives to higher education institutions. It is only recently that the distinct perspectives of women have been treated as worthy of study. Through expioration with method and analysis, I am convinced that there is much that language can inform us about how both women and men encounter and understand organizations.

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